

REMARKS

The independent claim has been further amended in a sincere attempt patentably to distinguish the claimed subject matter from the prior art. The claim now specifies that (1) the canning structure consists essentially of the stated elements , (2) the holding member is a non-intumescent ceramic fiber mat holding member, and (3) the ceramic honeycomb structure is fixed beforehand within the metal case by the holding member only. Claim 6 has been canceled in view of the change to claim 1 and claim 8 has been revised so that it is more consistent with claim 1 as amended.

Applicants respectfully submit that Close et al. '865 specifically requires a foamed member which does not correspond to the holding member as now defined and that foamed member in the Close et al. '865 device must be in place whether or not end plates are present in the reference device during manufacture. In addition, the Close et al. '865 device contains elements excluded by the claims as amended.

The Examiner's comments in the paragraph at the bottom of page 3 of the Advisory Action mailed November 9, 2004 are noted. It is respectfully submitted for the reasons given above that

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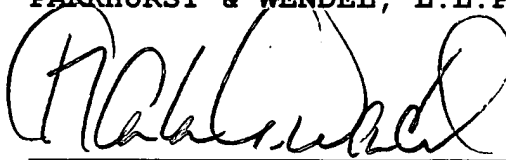
the claims patentably define over Close et al. '865 either alone or in combination with the other cited references. Furthermore, the foaming material in Close et al. '865 is not for the honeycomb structure but as a further support material; thus, the last sentence at the bottom of page 3 of the Advisory Action is believed to be a misinterpretation of the reference.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 1 to 5 and 8 are in immediate condition for allowance and a USPTO paper to those ends is earnestly solicited.

The Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned should further changes be required in the claims prior to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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